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ABSTRACT

This report presents information on Colorado's child care needs and on the services provided by the Colorado Office of Resource and Referral Agencies (COORA). The report presents a brief account of recent research on brain development and implications for child care providers. Recent findings indicate that only 6 percent of Colorado's licensed child care centers provide a high enough quality of care to support children's developmental needs. The report then describes the need for quality, affordable child care, emphasizing the percent of child care providers offering non-standard schedules, and the percent of monthly family income spent on child care. Next, the report outlines the compensation, tenure, and educational qualifications of child care workers, with staff turnover identified as an important indicator of poor quality care. Quality care is defined from a child's perspective. Finally, the report outlines the capacity, eligibility, availability, and cost of Head Start, the Colorado Preschool Program, CCAP Child Care, and marketplace child care. Listed are: (1) Services of the Colorado Office of Resource and Referral Agencies; (2) recent state initiatives; (3) CORRA regional office information; and (4) Goals 2002 for Colorado. Contains 7 references. (KB)

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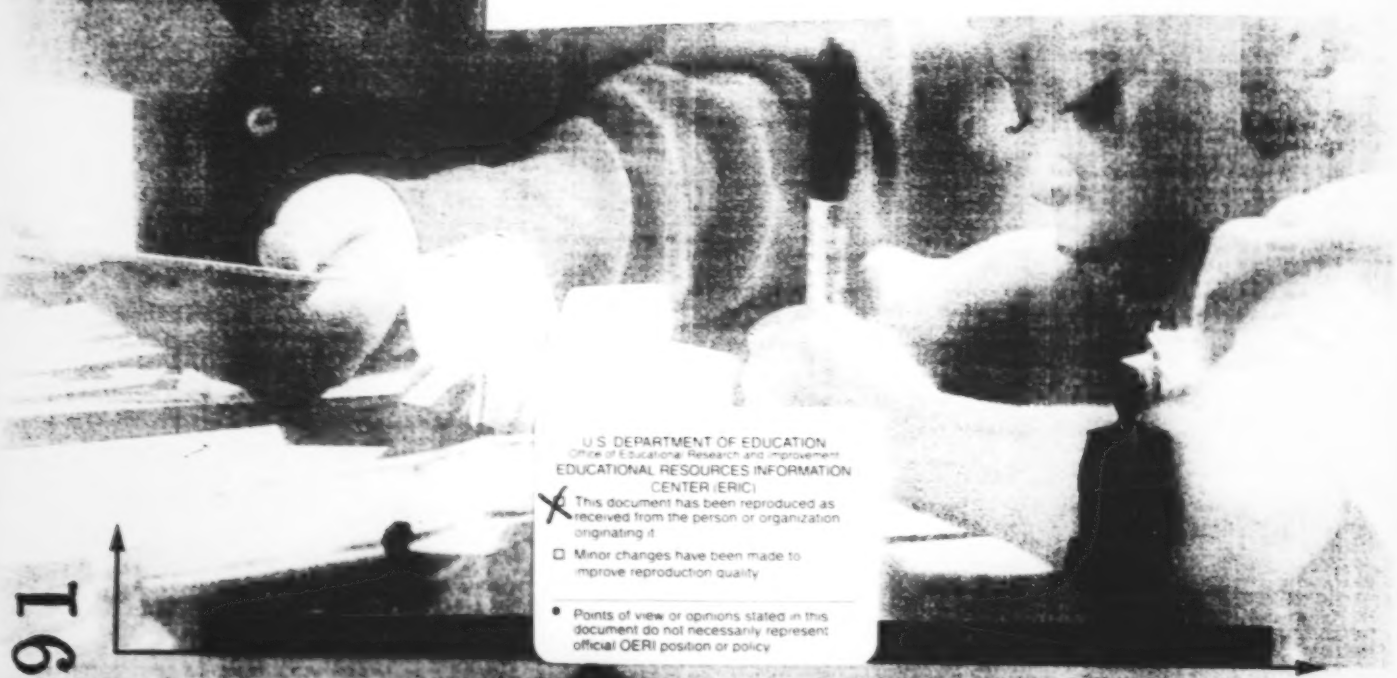
FINDING THE BALANCE

A Child Care Data Report

Presented by

The Colorado Office of
Resource & Referral Agencies, Inc.



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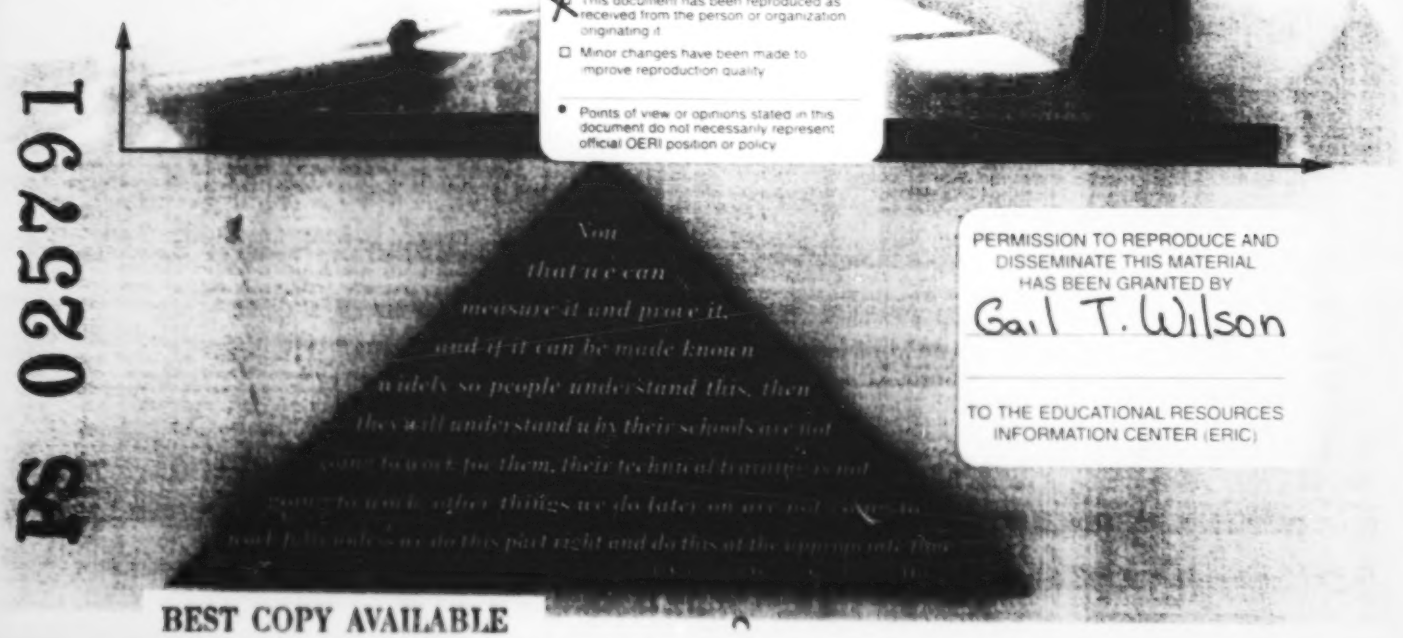

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The Colorado Office of Resource & Referral Agencies, Inc. is the coordinating office for Colorado's child care resource & referral system.

Mission Statement

CORRA works collaboratively to:

- Promote universal access to quality child care;
- Support and empower families; and
- Impact policy and systems change.

Additional copies may be ordered by sending your name and address, along with a check or money order for **$5.00** payable to "CORRA", to:

CORRA
7853 E. Arapahoe Ct., #3300
Englewood, CO 80112-1377
(303)290-9088

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CORRA Staff

Gail T. Wilson, **Executive Director**

Neila Achter, **Senior Program Coordinator**

Jill Hart, **CALLSPlus Director**

Jennifer Burnham, **Colorado Options for Inclusive Child Care (COFICC) Coordinator**

Monica Clancy, **Director of Special Projects**

Dennis Grogan, **Colorado Child Care Corps Coordinator**

Sue Renner, **T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Coordinator**

Joy Welker, **Finance Coordinator**

FINDING THE BALANCE

A Child Care Data Report

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"By kindergarten, teachers have classes with too many children who are already years behind." Barbara O Brien
Colorado Children's Campaign

Exciting new research gives us the opportunity to make informed choices for Colorado's children and families. In recent years scientists have conducted revolutionary experiments that reveal the astonishing development of young brains in early childhood. We now know:

- By the age of two, a child's brain contains twice as many synapses and consumes twice as much energy as the brain of a normal adult. It is the **connection between the potential** that these synapses represent and **a child's environment** that creates the physical connections for later learning.

- Deprived of a stimulating environment, a child's brain suffers: Children who don't play much or are rarely touched develop brains 20% to 30% smaller than normal for their age.

- Children develop through appropriate stimulation during windows of opportunity for the growth of physical connections. If these windows are missed or filled with negative experiences, in some cases recovery is possible, but the timing and intensity of intervention is crucial.

"Experience is the chief architect of the brain."
-Dr Bruce Perry, Baylor College of Medicine

Scientist have revealed that, deprived of a stimulating environment, a child's brain suffers. Children who don't play much or are rarely touched develop brains 20% to 30% smaller than normal for their age.

What Nurtures Healthy Brain Development?

Educated, economically stable, dependable, emotionally responsive parents;

Intensive nurturing;

A rich and responsive language environment in which children are exposed to a wide vocabulary and are read to every day;

Full time year-round care and education (whether provided by parents or other significant caregivers) that keeps children safe and provides consistent, enriched learning environments with toys, playmates, and challenges that teach children things they're ready for.

KidsCount in Colorado! 1997

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Only 6% of Colorado's licensed child care centers provide a high enough quality of care to support children's developmental needs.

Colorado Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes in Child Care Centers, 1996

Recent Research Reveals...

Human development hinges on the interplay between nature and nurture.

- The impact of environmental factors on the young child's brain development is dramatic and specific, affecting how the intricate circuitry of the human brain is *wired*.

Early care has **decisive and long-lasting effects** on how people **develop and learn**, how they cope with stress, **and how they regulate** their own emotions.

Individuals' capacities to control their own emotional states appear to hinge on biological systems shaped by their early experiences and attachments.

- A strong, secure attachment to a nurturing adult can have a protective biological function, helping a growing child withstand the ordinary stresses of daily lives.

The human brain has a remarkable capacity to change, but timing is crucial.

- There are optimal periods of opportunity - "prime times" during which the brain is particularly efficient at specific types of learning.

The brain's plasticity also means that there are times when negative experiences or the absence of appropriate stimulation are more likely to have serious and sustained effects.

- Many of these risk factors are associated with or exacerbated by poverty.

Evidence amassed by neuroscientists and child development experts over the last decade point to the wisdom and efficacy of prevention and early intervention.

- Well designed programs created to promote healthy cognitive, emotional, and social development can improve the prospects - and the quality of life - of many children.
- The efficacy of early intervention has been demonstrated and replicated in diverse communities across the nation.

Just as with public education and health care, the costs of child care services must be valued as a public good.

-Starting Points: Meeting the Needs of Our Youngest Children
Carnegie Corporation of New York

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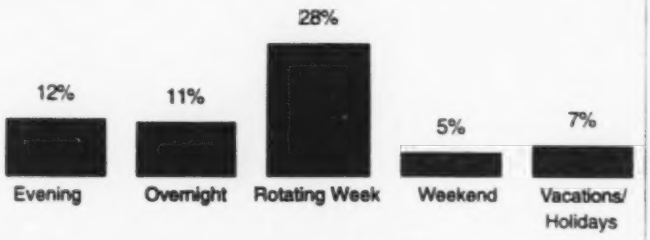
The need for good, affordable child care continues to increase. CORRA projects that by the year 2000, almost 70 percent of married women with children under six will be working outside of the home.

More than two-thirds of employed Americans over age 18 did not work the traditional Monday-through-Friday work week in 1991. CORRA has surveyed child care providers in Colorado about their accommodation of these irregular schedules and found the following:

Percent of Child Care Providers in Colorado Offering Non-Standard Schedules



Little incentive exists in the current child care marketplace for providers to offer odd-hour care.

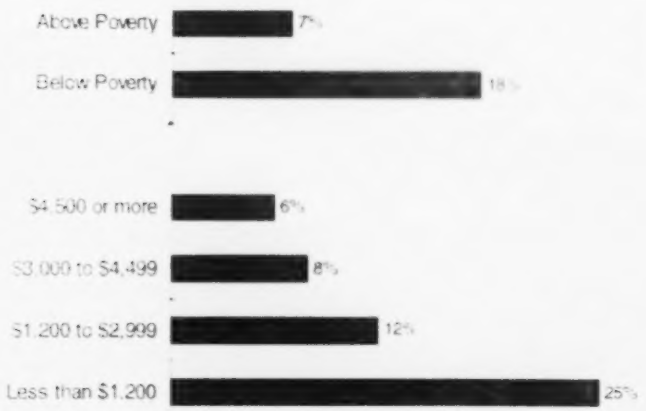
In Colorado 31,000 children under age 2 ½ need care outside of their home.

There are approximately 19,000 licensed slots.

This means that there are over 12,000 infants and toddlers in need of care above the estimated supply

Source: US Census, CORRA

Percent of Monthly Family Income Spent on Child Care



The average wage for a welfare to work participant receiving full time employment is $6.40/hour or $1,109/month.

The average welfare recipient in 1996 was a single mother with 2 children.

The average full-time cost of care for 2 children is $670/month or 60% of the average welfare family's income without a child care subsidy.

Source: US Census, "What does it Cost to Mind our Preschoolers?"

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"I don't know how we're going to find enough workers. Why would someone work in child care for $5 an hour when they can work in retail for twice as much with benefits?" The Denver Post

In 1995 there were an estimated 18,493 child care workers in Colorado. In 2005, there are projected to be 26,154. This represents an *annual* growth of 766 employees which ranks 13th in Colorado for job growth.

Who are these caregivers?

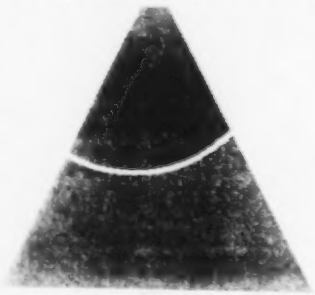
Compensation

- The average wage of a child care worker in Colorado is $5.65 per hour.
- The average entry-level wage is $5.15 per hour (minimum wage).
- Provider's salaries have declined 25% since 1975 when adjusted for inflation.
- Profit margin in Colorado child care centers is 3%.

Researchers have concluded through statistical analysis of quality variables that teacher compensation is related to the quality of care children receive.

"Staff turnover is an important indicator of poor-quality care because children who lose their regular caregivers tend to experience negative outcomes such as poor language and social development and in at least one study, increased aggression."

Helburn & Howes
The Future of Children: Financing Child Care



Tenure

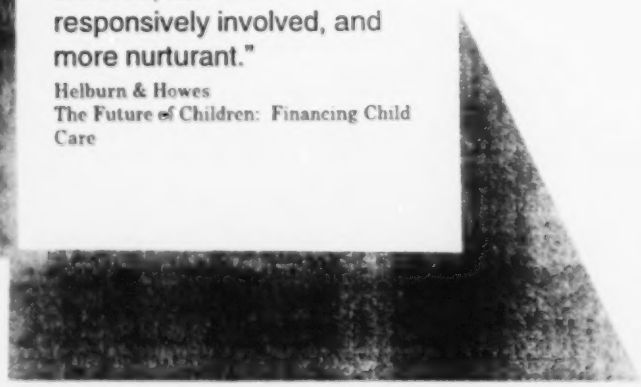
- Colorado child care centers report a staff turnover rate of 41%.
- This compares with a turnover rate of 15% reported by all U.S. companies.

"Providers who are committed to their jobs, satisfied, and compensated adequately are more sensitive to the children, more responsively involved, and more nurturant."

Helburn & Howes
The Future of Children: Financing Child Care

Education

- Research indicates that both *higher education* and *specialized training in early childhood education* is related to the quality of care caregivers provide.
- The Colorado Cost, Quality and Outcomes study identifies teacher education as an area of weakness when it comes to the level of quality in Colorado Child Care Centers.



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"Here was the most precious thing I had, and I was going to entrust someone or some organization with her - you check it out. I wanted to trust the person, make sure the person was good, that my daughter wouldn't just be there."

Parents Speak About Child Care Kathy Modigliani

"Parents need to be as comfortable 'reading the labels' of child care as they now are reading food labels"

Polly Talen
Dayton Hudson Foundation

In order to work, parents need to find reliable care that meets the needs of their schedules. In order to grow, children need their developmental needs met. Consumer education must, then, have a two-generational focus that can lead to positive outcomes for children and stability that leads to self-sufficiency.

Parents want the best for their children. They encounter two obstacles in obtaining the best child care:

- The supply of care that meets children's needs is extremely small.
- Research indicates that parents often have a difficult time discerning quality care.

By educating parents about what quality care looks like and how to ask for it, the demand for quality care can be developed.

What is quality care from a child's perspective? A number of 4 and 5 year old Colorado children were asked, "What do you need to know to be a teacher?" They responded,

"You need to know how to...

"LISTEN TO A PERSON'S HURT."

"MAKE SURE ALL CHILDREN ARE SAFE."

"MAKE SURE CHILDREN ARE DOING WHAT THEY ARE ABLE TO DO."

"USE GOOD WORDS LIKE 'PLEASE', 'THANK YOU', AND 'WHAT WOULD MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER?'"

"MAKE SURE CHILDREN ARE CAREFUL WITH THEIR SELF AND THEIR BODY."

"TEACH CHILDREN THINGS THEY'RE READY FOR."

"MAKE THE CLASSROOM BEAUTIFUL SO CHILDREN CAN LEARN."

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The role of state governments as managers of scientific data on children and families is likely to grow. Child Care for Low Income Families: Directions for Research, 1996

Growing out of the needs of working families and their children, America has one of the most diverse child care systems available anywhere in the world. This diversity must be supported with integrated funding.

Part day, part year, part week programs do not help working families, and transient caregivers are bad for children's need of security and stability. Yet this is the core of the system in which families currently function.

	Capacity	Eligibility	Availability	Cost
Head Start	8,118 children	3-5 year olds	part day part week part year	$30,000,000
Colorado Preschool Program	8,500 children	4 year olds	part day part week part year	$17,000,000
CCAP Child Care	27,000	all ages	supply varies	$50,000,000
Marketplace Child Care	117,853	all ages	supply varies	$562,630,222

There is currently a lack of coordination between programs in Colorado which results in inconsistencies and gaps in service:

Inconsistencies in...

- quality
- career development
- regulatory systems
- funding streams
- planning
- governance
- cost of service production

Programs frequently compete with each other for the same children, leaving many children unserved or bouncing between settings. This impacts family stability and self-sufficiency, and the healthy development of children.

Finding the Balance: The Role of CORRA

The Colorado Office of Resource and Referral Agencies, Inc. coordinates several projects that are targeted at the issues of quality, affordability and accessibility:

Child Care Resource & Referral System

A statewide network of local nonprofits supporting families and early childhood caregivers

Associate Center of the National Center for Health & Safety in Child Care

Facilitating the cross fertilization of knowledge and efforts between child care and child health

Colorado Child Care Corps

17 AmeriCorps volunteers working in communities across Colorado addressing local child care supply issues

Colorado Options for Inclusive Child Care (COFICC)

Offering capacity building and resource brokering for families with children with special needs to the local child care community

Child Care Vouchers

Emergency vouchers to homeless families in the Denver Metro area, collaborating with the state subsidized child care program in Boulder county

Employer Services

Customized assistance and programs to develop and offer work-life employee assistance

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood®

A scholarship program for caregivers to continue their formal education in early childhood

Training Calendar

A quarterly listing of training opportunities available to parents and caregivers on child growth and development

CALLSPlus

A comprehensive data base of human services designed to simplify and integrate the search for family services

Recent State Initiatives

Bright Beginnings
A volunteer community-based initiative to provide new parents with information about child development

Core Knowledge and Standards
A guide for early childhood professional development through education and training opportunities

Colorado Business Commission on Child Care Financing
A volunteer group of committee business men and women studying the structure of Colorado's child care finance system

Division of Child Care
State regulation of child care programs defining the base of health and safety measures for child care services

Early Childhood Professional Credential System
A voluntary recognition for caregivers acknowledging professional growth

Qualtiy Child Care Tax Check-Off
Allows tax filers to donate to a fund that supports improvements to licensed child care facilities

Quality Standards
A set of benchmarks for child care programs to measure themselves against for quality enhancement

State Income Tax Credit
Allows working families to deduct a portion of their child care expenses from their state taxes

Youth Crime Prevention and Intervention Fund
State fiscal support for early childhood prevention initiatives

Selected Resources

Behrman, Richard E. *The Future of Children: Financing Child Care.* Los Angeles, CA: The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, 1996.

Collins, J., The Day-Care Dilemma, *Time Magazine*, February 3, 1997.

Helburn, S., Culkin, M., Morris, J., Mocan, N., *Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes in Child Care Centers: Colorado Report, June 1996.* Denver, CO: Univesity of Colorado at Denver, 1996.

Modiglianai, Kathy. *Parents Speak About Child Care.* Boston, MA: Wheelock College, 1996.

Nash, J. Madeleine., Fertile Minds, *Time Magazine*, February 3, 1997.

Report of the Colorado Business Commission on Child Care Financing, December, 1995.

Shulman, S. *KidsCount in Colorado! 1997.* Denver, CO: Colorado Children's Campaign, 1997.

Colorado's Resource & Referral System

Front Range

Adams, Arapahoe, Denver, Douglas
Work & Family Resource Center
(303)534-2625
(800)288-3444

Jefferson,Clear Creek, Gilpin,Park
Family Resources & Child Care Education
(303)969-9500
(800)436-3665

Boulder
Children's Services
(303)441-3180

El Paso,Elbert,Teller
Child Care Connections
(719)634-6765
(800)379-6765

Larimer
The Women's Center
(970)484-1902
(970)663-2288

Weld
Weld Information & Referral Service
(970)330-7964
(800)559-5590

Summit,Lake
Summit County CCR&R Agency
(970)668-0412

Eagle,Pitkin, Garfield
Eagle County CCR&R Agency
(970)949-7097

Western Slope

Archuleta, Dolores, Hinsdale, La Plata, Montezuma, San Juan
La Plata Family Centers Coalition
(970)385-4747

Delta, Gunnison, Montrose, Ouray, San Miguel
Olathe Family Ties
(970)323-0121
(800)530-2033

Mesa
Mesa County Resource & Referral
(970)241-1764

Grand, Jackson, Moffat, Routt, Rio Blanco
Child Care Network
(970)879-7330
(888)879-7330

Eastern Plains

Baca, Bent, Crowley, Otero, Prowers
Children First
(719)549-3411
(800)894-7707

Cheyenne, Kiowa, Kit Carson, Lincoln
Child Care Connections
(719)634-6765
(800)379-6765

Logan, Philips, Sedgwick
Family Connections
(970)522-9411

Morgan, Washington, Yuma
Rural Communities Resource Center
(970)848-3867
(800)794-3867

Southern Colorado

Chaffee, Custer, Fremont, Huerfano, Las Animas, Pueblo
Children First
(719)549-3411
(800)894-7707

Alamosa, Costilla, Conejos, Mineral, Rio Grande, Saguache
San Luis Valley Resource and Referral Service
(719)589-4453
(800)411-8382

CORRA system agencies are community-based nonprofit organizations that:

- recruit and help train child care providers
- maintain detailed profiles of all legally operating child care services
- supply consumer education about all forms of child care, helping families to recognize quality care
- help families find child care providers, based on their unique needs and preferences
- support businesses in creating family-friendly policies and options
- provide child care supply/demand data and related information to community leaders

CORRA

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Goals 2002

New research in brain development indicates the enormous importance of the care that children receive in the earliest years. The policies and practices that affect their daily experiences are critical to outcomes as they grow up. The CORRA system challenges Colorado to begin to address this issue by adopting the following concrete goals:

By the Year 2002...

Every caregiver of children under 24 months in the state of Colorado will have at least **24 hours of training** on the importance of early brain development and caregiving strategies to support it.

By the Year 2002...

Every parent in Colorado will have **access to information** on the healthy development of the brain and effective parenting strategies.

By the Year 2002...

Every parent of an infant in Colorado will have **access to consumer education** on how to choose good care for their baby.

By the Year 2002...

Every family in Colorado will be able to spend **less than 10% of its income** for quality care.

By the Year 2002...

Every family in Colorado will have **a variety of child care choices which include staying at home** with their infants or using quality child care in the community.

We challenge Colorado to adopt these goals!

Colorado Office of
Resource & Referral Agencies, Inc.
7853 E. Arapahoe Ct., #3300
Englewood, CO 80112-1377

(303)290-9088
http://www.sni.net/child_care/
HN4770@handsnet.org

The National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (NACCRRA), a national membership organization, has adopted these goals to address the needs of our nation's children and families.